



**NORTH DAKOTA**  
DEPARTMENT *of* HEALTH

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## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:  
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### **State Health Department Releases Update of Flood-Related Injuries and Illnesses** ***Flood Fighters Urged To Take Precautions To Ensure Personal Safety***

BISMARCK, N.D. – The number of illnesses and injuries related to flood activities has risen, according to Kirby Kruger, state epidemiologist with the North Dakota Department of Health. As a result, the department is urging North Dakotans involved in the flood fight or cleanup to take precautions to ensure their safety.

Between March 27, 2009, and April 3, 2009, 155 flood-related injuries were reported to the Department of Health from emergency rooms across the state. That brings the total to 205 since surveillance began March 23, 2009. In addition, the number of flood-related illnesses reported to the department in the same time period was 47, bringing the total to 58. The total number of flood-related deaths remains at two.

Flood-related injuries and illnesses reported to the department include back injuries, fractures, cuts, joint and muscle injuries, anxiety and stress, injuries resulting from motor vehicle crashes, and carbon monoxide poisoning.

The Department of Health provides the following safety guidelines for people involved in the flood fight:

- Do not overexert yourself if you are not used to doing strenuous work. Know your physical limits and take frequent breaks.
- Make sure to lift properly – with your legs, not your back.
- Always wear your seatbelt and drive safely.
- Use alternate heating and power sources according to manufacturer instructions. If portable generators are used, do not place them in an enclosed area such as a garage or near a window, door or fresh-air intake.

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Visit the health department home page at [www.ndhealth.gov](http://www.ndhealth.gov).

- When cleaning up after a flood, wear sturdy shoes, protective eyewear and masks, if possible.
- Dispose of garbage properly.
- Wash your hands before you eat or drink.
- Drink plenty of water to avoid dehydration.
- If you become injured, wash the wound with soapy water and seek medical care if needed.
- If you have concerns about being exposed to a poisonous substance, call the Poison Center at 800.222.1222.

The Department of Health began conducting surveillance of emergency rooms across the state on March 23, 2009, to assess the extent of injuries and illnesses related to flooding. All emergency rooms report the number of injuries or illnesses seen due to flood-related events.

Flood-related safety and cleanup information is available on the Department of Health's website at [www.ndhealth.gov/flood](http://www.ndhealth.gov/flood).

For more information, contact Kirby Kruger, North Dakota Department of Health, at 701.328.2378.

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